

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 EB-07 OES-03 /094 W

----- 088639

P R 182015Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6223

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 33150

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MILI EAID TECH FR EG

SUBJECT: GISCARD'S VISIT TO EGYPT

REF: (A) PARIS 32410; (B) PARIS 31765 (BOTH NOTAL)

SUMMARY: GISCARD'S EGYPTIAN VISIT SERVED TO RECALL
FRENCH BACKING FOR MODERATION IR THE ME AND SHOWED THAT
SADAT COULD FIND FRIENDS OTHER THAN THE US AND USSR. IN
SEEKING NOT TO OFFEND OTHER ARABS BY EMBRACING SADAT TOO
CLOSELY, GISCARD HAD SOME UNCOMFORTABLE MOMENTS. HE
EMPHASIZED MEDITERRANEAN SOLIDARITY AND SECURITY AND
CALLED FOR AN "INDEPENDENT" PALESTINIAN HOMELAND. NO
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NEW ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED, BUT A

NUMBER OF PROJECTS ARE OR PROBABLY WILL BE FINANCED BY ALREADY COMMITTED FUNDS. NUCLEAR COOPERATION TALKS APPARENTLY DID NOT INCLUDE REACTOR SALES. FRENCH COLLABORATION IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ARAB ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY IS BEING STUDIED, BUT THE QUAI DOES NOT ANTICIPATE EARLY SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING'S DECEMBER 10-15 VISIT TO EGYPT PRODUCED A GREAT DEAL OF COPY FOR THE FRENCH PRESS. IN ADDITION TO INTERVIEWS OF SADAT AND OTHER EGYPTIAN AND FRENCH LEADERS, THE MEDIA CARRIED EXTENDED COMMENT ON EGYPTIAN HISTORY, THE HISTORIC TIES BETWEEN EGYPT AND FRANCE, GISCARD'S TRAVEL TO ISMAILIA AND UPPER EGYPT, EUROPEAN-ARAB RELATIONS, THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT, AND FRANCO-EGYPTIAN COOPERATION IN NUMEROUS TRADE, INVESTMENT, NUCLEAR AND ARMAMENT PROJECTS. THE LENGTHY FINAL COMMUNIQUE AND THE UNUSUAL JOINT DECLARATION WERE DUTIFULLY REPORTED, BUT BY THE END OF THE TRIP SOME FRENCH JOURNALS, NOTABLY LE FIGARO, BEGAN TO SUGGEST THAT NOT VERY MUCH WAS REALLY ACCOMPLISHED BY THE VISIT. WE SHARE THIS SENTIMENT.

2. ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, THE FRENCH MADE A GESTURE TOWARDS ARAB MODERATION AS EMBODIED IN SADAT. SADAT, IN TURN, WAS ABLE TO POINT UP HIS GOOD RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE, PORTRAYING IT AS A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE U.S. AND USSR AS A SOURCE FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SUPPORT. BUT EVEN IN THIS REALM, THE FRENCH FOUND THE VISIT NOT ENTIRELY PAINLESS. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ME AFFAIRS SERVANT TOLD US DECEMBER 16 THAT GISCARD HESITATED TO ACCEPT HIS HOSTS' INVITATION TO VISIT ISMAILIA LEST IT BE EXPLOITED BY EGYPT AS A SIGN OF FRENCH SUPPORT FOR ALL OF SADAT'S POLICIES. INCLUDING THE YOM KIPPUR WAR AND THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH, AND THUS OFFEND OTHER ARABS. (THE SYRIAN AMBASSADOR HERE PLACED JUST SUCH AN INTERPRETATION ON THE ENTIRE VISIT, ACCORDING TO SERVANT.) GISCARD THEREFORE EMPHASIZED AT ISMAILIA THE POSITIVE RESULTS STEMMING FROM THE OPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL AND MADE NO MENTION OF THE WAR.

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3. SERVANT SAID THE POLITICAL CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN GISCARD AND SADAT WENT DEEPLY INTO AREA PROBLEMS AND THAT THERE WAS BROAD AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, WHEN SADAT PRESSED TO OBTAIN BLANKET APPROVAL OF EGYPTIAN POLICIES, GISCARD HAD SOME AWKWARD MOMENTS.

4. SERVANT DESCRIBED THE JOINT DECLARATION AS SOME-

THING LESS THAN A TREATY BUT AS AN IMPORTANT STATEMENT
OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO
COUNTRIES. SUGGESTED BY THE EGYPTIANS, WHO WANTED TO
RAISE THE LEVEL OF THE VISIT ABOVE ROUTINE, THE JOINT
DECLARATION WAS DRAFTED BY THE FRENCH, WHO INCLUDED MEN-
TION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AS "A BOND BETWEEN PEOPLES WHO
EACH DAY BECOME MORE CONSCIOUS OF THE FUNDAMENTAL SOLI-
DARITY OF THEIR INTERESTS AS MEDITERRANEANS," A
THEME SOUNDED BY GISCARD IN SPEECHES IN EGYPT AND DURING

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 33150

EARLIER VISITS TO THE MAGHREB AND GREECE. THE DECLARA-
TION ALSO ACCENTS FRANCO-EGYPTIAN COOPERATION, THE NEED

FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND EGYPTIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. SERVANT CONSIDERED THE DECLARATION MORE USEFUL TO SADAT THAN TO THE FRENCH.

5. THE POLITICAL PART OF THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE CONTAINS NO SURPRISES. HOWEVER, IT CALLS FOR AN "INDEPENDENT" PALESTINIAN HOMELAND, AN ADJECTIVE PREVIOUSLY USED BY THE FRENCH IN PRIVATE BUT TO BEST OF OUR RECOLLECTION ONLY ONCE BEFORE IN A PUBLIC DOCUMENT. LEBANON, THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE AND THE CIEC RECEIVE ROUTINE TREATMENT.

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6. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE, SERVANT SAID HE WAS AWARE OF NO NEW FRENCH FINANCIAL COMMITMENT BEYOND THE 850 MILLION FRANC PROTOCOL SIGNED LAST NOVEMBER. GISCARD'S PROMISE TO ASSIST WITH THE CAIRO SUBWAY (IN REALITY, AN EXTENSION TO CENTRAL CAIRO OF AN ALREADY EXISTING SURFACE RAPID TRANSIT LINE) MIGHT REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FUNDS, SERVANT CONCEDED, BUT THE OTHER PROJECTS DISCUSSED WOULD HAVE TO COME OUT OF NOVEMBER PROTOCOL AUTHORIZATIONS OR AWAIT LATER YEAR FUNDING. PROJECTS UNDER WAY COVERED BY THE NOVEMBER PROTOCOL INCLUDE THE FIRST TRANCHE OF THE ABOUKIR THERMAL POWER STATION, AN ASSEMBLY PLANT FOR UTILITY VEHICLES, TELETYPE MACHINES, AND PREFABRICATED BUILDINGS. PROJECTS NOW BEING CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING WITH NOVEMBER PROTOCOL MONEY INCLUDE THE SECOND TRANCHE OF ABOUKIR, CAIRO TELEPHONE SYSTEM, TELECOMMUNICATIONS CABLE FROM PORT SAID TO CAIRO TO SUEZ, AN ALUMINUM ROLLING MILL, AND A MAPMAKING PROGRAM. OTHER PROJECTS DISCUSSED WHICH HAVE NOT PASSED THE STUDY STAGE (AND FOR WHICH THERE IS APT TO BE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION) INCLUDE: EQUIPMENT FOR THE EGYPTIAN PETROLEUM INSTITUTE; TIRES; NUCLEAR RESEARCH AND EXPLOITATION; A WATER DESALINIZATION PLANT; SOLAR ENERGY; SUEZ CANAL IMPROVEMENTS; AND IMPROVEMENTS AT PORT SAID. SERVANT CONFIRMED REFTEL (A) REPORT THAT NO SALE OR EVEN DISCUSSION OF SALE OF A NUCLEAR REACTOR TOOK PLACE.

7. SERVANT THOUGHT THAT, CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS, THERE HAD BEEN NO DETAILED CONSIDERATION OF FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN AN ARAB ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS. SERVANT AGREED WITH THE VIEW EXPRESSED EARLIER BY ANOTHER QUAI OFFICIAL (PARIS 30238) THAT THE EGYPTIANS ARE NOT NOW IN A POSITION TO MAKE THE EFFORT REQUIRED TO MOUNT A SIGNIFICANT ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE FRENCH ARE SERIOUSLY STUDYING THE EGYPTIAN REQUEST OF SIX MONTHS AGO FOR FRENCH COLLABORATION, ARE WELL DISPOSED TOWARDS THE IDEA, AND

KNOW THEY MUST CALCULATE CAREFULLY IN THE MATTER. SO FAR, THE EGYPTIANS HAVE FAILED TO COME UP WITH AN OVER-ALL PLARNING DOCUMENT OR OTHER PRECISE INFORMATION ON THEIR NEEDS WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED BEFORE THE FRENCH
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COULD MAKE ANY DECISION. SADAT, SERVANT ADDED, WENT A LITTLE FAR IN PUBLIC CONCERNING THE PROGRESS OF BILATERAL ARMAMENTS DISCUSSIONS.

8. AS A FOOTNOTE, SERVANT ONCE AGAIN DESCRIBED FONMIN FAHMY AS AN OPPORTUNIST WHO, ALTHOUGH SELECTED BECAUSE OF HIS ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT SADAT'S PRO-AMERICAN TILT, IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED AND MIGHT MAKE A SUDDEN SHIFT AT ANY TIME. FAHMY IS THE QUAI'S FAVORITE EGYPTIAN WHIPPING BOY, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE IS GENUINELY THOUGHT TO BE DANGEROUSLY OPPORTUNISTIC BUT MORE PROBABLY BECAUSE FAHMY DISLIKES THE FRENCH.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS33150
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750440-0674
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751228/aaaaayck.tel
Line Count: 246
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 PARIS 32410, 75 PARIS 31765
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAY 2003 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <06 OCT 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GISCARD'S VISIT TO EGYPT
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, EAID, TECH, FR, EG, (GISCARD D'ESTAING, VALERY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006